

*A Monologue Project*

**An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)**

**by**

*Sarah M. White*

**Thesis Advisor**  
*Jennifer Blackmer*

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "J. Blackmer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a long, sweeping tail.

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## Abstract

Monologues, or solo dramatic pieces, are essential for a young actor. Monologues are what show directors and casting directors if an actor can act, and whether or not they are right for the part. Most of my time over the next few years will be spent auditioning for countless plays and musicals. I will need a wide range of monologues to pull from, whether I am auditioning for a Shakespeare play or a contemporary drama. This project includes a list of monologues that I can take to auditions, with all of the required research done. Each monologue has with it a summary of the play, information on the character from my reading of the play, and any other helpful additional notes. The monologues themselves are cut down to about a minute each and are typed out in context of the script. This monologue book will be extremely helpful to me when I am working on these pieces and when I am choosing which one to show at an audition. I can identify with each of these characters, and I connect with each of the pieces in one way or another. It will be an invaluable tool for me over the beginning years of my acting career, and hopefully these monologues will help me get an acting job one day soon.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Jennifer Blackmer for agreeing to be my advisor for this project.

I would like to thank Wendy Mortimer for always taking time out of her busy schedule to help me work on numerous Shakespeare as well as contemporary monologues.

I would like to extend thanks to Gina Cerimele-Mechley for giving me valuable suggestions for finding monologues over the years.

Finally, I am eternally grateful to all of my past and present acting teachers for their infinite wisdom and guidance, for always challenging me to find the strength inside of me, and for giving me the courage to be a real person.

## Author's Statement

"Monologue" is a deceiving term. In a play, it is basically one character speaking for an extended amount of time, longer than 45 seconds or so. But, one person won't just talk for a minute or more just to listen to him or herself talk. That person is actively trying to get something from the other character in the room. A monologue is still a scene, in that it involves at least one other person, even if they aren't actually standing there. One of my acting teachers once said, "We never start out to say a monologue" (Mortimer). We find the words in the moment, discovering them as we solve the problem. Now, this is all fine and well, but what is the point of a monologue?

Young actors need what we call a "monologue book," which basically means a collection of monologues to take to auditions. Actors don't go to typical job interviews. Rather, they audition for jobs. Auditions can come up at any moment, and it is important to be prepared to audition for many types of roles at any time. The pieces in one's monologue book should capture that actor's individual versatility and range.

I am a musical theatre major, and I have been working these four years to build my repertory of musical theatre songs for auditions, but haven't concentrated as much on the monologues. For this project, I wanted to do something practical and beneficial to me as I go out into the world to be a working actor. We don't spend a lot of time in classes looking for or working on monologues, but we learn the tools early on so we can do it on our own. When I graduate, I plan on going to a lot of auditions for straight plays (non-musicals). I will need a wide range of monologues, classical to contemporary (Shakespeare to recent plays), serious to funny, and covering my appropriate age range.

Throughout the semester, I compiled a few monologues I already had and began hunting for new ones. I reviewed a lot of anthologies and flipped through a lot of plays until I found pieces that I liked. I now have six Shakespeare monologues, one other classical monologue, and eight contemporary monologues. I typed them all out, keeping them in context of the scene, so I know exactly what's going on. Then I have a page or two after that gives me all the information and help I will need to work on the monologue. I have most of these memorized and audition-ready at this point, but if I ever want to refresh my memory on something, I will come back to this document to remind myself and continue working. That's the great thing about this project: It's still a work in progress.

What I have included with each monologue is the character's age, an approximate time for the monologue (some auditions are strict about the one minute time limit), a summary of the play, who I am talking to, what happened right before the monologue happens in the play, character notes, definitions of words I don't know, and any notes from any work sessions I might have had with a teacher. This is all essential information to have when working monologues because they are most successful when they are performed with clarity and specificity. Clarity is achieved when actors know exactly whom they are talking to and what they are trying to get from that person. Specificity is achieved when actors know the meaning of every word they are speaking and why. I have attempted to figure out this information for each of the pieces in my monologue book. Playwrights give a lot of clues, and sometimes they aren't easy to find, so reading the entire play is very important when approaching a monologue. With the Shakespeare pieces specifically, I have utilized some great outside sources, like



*Shakespeare A to Z* and my Shakespeare Lexicons (which contain definitions of every word at every location in the entire canon of Shakespeare plays) to help me decipher the language and the stories. With the contemporary plays, however, I relied on my script analysis techniques and some outside help from teachers. It is a very time-consuming, mind-consuming, body-consuming process. It requires a lot of question asking and experimentation. I often have to say the words out loud innumerable times before I finally understand what they mean. I stop to read over a confusing scene again so that I can understand exactly why the character did *that*. Sometimes, I just have to walk away from the piece for a few weeks and then suddenly, a light bulb will go off. Sometimes I would work on a piece for a while only to discover that it just isn't right for me, and I would throw it out. It is a frustrating process, yet I learned so much about myself and what kind of actor I want to become.

This was an invaluable project for me, and it forced me to really prepare myself for entering this career. I now have an assortment of usable monologues all in one place, clearly formatted. I basically used tools from all of my acting classes, as well as the advice from my teachers who know me, to find solid monologues to take to auditions. I feel like I have a wide range of young women whose stories I can tell. I have romantic women, neurotic women, strong women, and even a fairy. I have monologues in which I essentially stand still and monologues that involve a lot of movement. I used script analysis methods from sophomore and junior year classes, and I used advice I've gotten from teachers through the years. This truly feels like a culmination of my acting training at Ball State, and I can't wait to continue building my monologue book in the future once I get out into the real world.

## Works Cited

Mortimer, Wendy. Introduction to Voice for the Actor. Ball State University, Muncie, IN.

02 Feb 2010. Lecture.

## Monologue Book Table of Contents

Show	Author	Character	Time Period	Tone	Pg #
<i>Measure for Measure</i>	Shakespeare	Isabella	Classical	Dramatic	1
<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	Shakespeare	Juliet	Classical	Comedic/ Romantic	5
<i>The Tempest</i>	Shakespeare	Miranda	Classical	Dramatic	9
<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	Shakespeare	Puck	Classical	Comedic/ Movement	12
<i>Richard III</i>	Shakespeare	Lady Anne	Classical	Dramatic	16
<i>Troilus and Cressida</i>	Shakespeare	Cressida	Classical	Comedic/ Romantic	20
<i>The Marriage</i>	Gogol	Agafya	Classical	Comedic	23
<i>None of the Above</i>	Jenny Lyn Bader	Jamie	Contemporary	Comedic	26
<i>Necessary Targets</i>	Eve Ensler	Melissa	Contemporary	Dramatic	29
<i>Iphigenia And Other Daughters</i>	Ellen McLaughlin	Chrysothemis	Contemporary	Dramatic/ Language	31
<i>Proof</i>	David Auburn	Catherine	Contemporary	Dramatic	34
<i>The Maiden's Prayer</i>	Nicky Silver	Libby	Contemporary	Comedic	36
<i>Collected Stories</i>	Donald Margulies	Lisa	Contemporary	Comedic	39
<i>The Scene</i>	Theresa Rebeck	Clea	Contemporary	Comedic	41
<i>I Am An Emotional Creature</i>	Eve Ensler	"Nose"	Contemporary	Dramatic	44

*Measure for Measure* [Act 5, Scene 1]

By: William Shakespeare

Character: Isabella, a young woman (Approximate time: 55 seconds)

**ISABELLA**

Most strange: but yet most truly will I speak.

That Angelo's forsworn, is it not strange?

That Angelo's a murderer, is't not strange?

That Angelo is an adulterous thief,

An hypocrite, a virgin-violator,

Is it not strange and strange?

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

~~Nay, it is ten times strange!~~

**ISABELLA**

It is not truer he is Angelo,

Than this is all as true as it is strange;

Nay, it is ten times true, for truth is truth

To th'end of reck'ning.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

~~Away with her! Poor soul,~~

~~She speaks this in the infirmity of sense.~~

**ISABELLA**

O prince, I conjure thee, as thou believ'st

There is another comfort than this world,

That thou neglect me not with that opinion

That I am touch'd with madness. Make not impossible

That which but seems unlike. 'Tis not impossible

But one, the wicked'st caitiff on the ground,

May seem as shy, as grave, as just, as absolute,  
As Angelo; even so may Angelo,  
In all his dressings, caracts, titles, forms,  
Be an arch-villain. Believe it, royal Prince,  
If he be less, he's nothing; but he's more,  
Had I more name for badness.

### Synopsis (From Sparknotes):

"Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* centers around the fate of Claudio, who is arrested by Lord Angelo, the temporary leader of Vienna. Angelo is left in charge by the Duke, who pretends to leave town but instead dresses as a friar to observe the goings-on in his absence. Angelo is strict, moralistic, and unwavering in his decision-making; he decides that there is too much freedom in Vienna and takes it upon himself to rid the city of brothels and unlawful sexual activity. Laws against these behaviors and institutions already exist, and Angelo simply decides to enforce them more strictly. Claudio is arrested for impregnating Juliet, his lover, before they were married. Although they were engaged and their sexual intercourse was consensual, Claudio is sentenced to death in order to serve as an example to the other Viennese citizens.

Isabella, Claudio's sister, is about to enter a nunnery when her brother is arrested. She is unfailingly virtuous, religious, and chaste. When she hears of her brother's arrest, she goes to Angelo to beg him for mercy. He refuses, but suggests that there might be some way to change his mind. When he propositions her, saying that he will let Claudio live if she agrees to have sexual intercourse with him, she is shocked and immediately refuses. Her brother agrees at first but then changes his mind. Isabella is left to contemplate a very important decision.

Isabella is, in a way, let off the hook when the Duke, dressed as a friar, intervenes. He tells her that Angelo's former lover, Mariana, was engaged to be married to him, but he abandoned her when she lost her dowry in a shipwreck. The Duke forms a plan by which Isabella will agree to have sex with the Angelo, but then Mariana will go in her place. The next morning, Angelo will pardon Claudio and be forced to marry Mariana according to the law.

Everything goes according to plan, except that Angelo does not pardon Claudio, fearing revenge. The provost and the Duke send him the head of a dead pirate, claiming that it belonged to Claudio, and Angelo believes that his orders were carried out. Isabella is told that her brother is dead, and that she should submit a complaint to the Duke, who is due to arrive shortly, accusing Angelo of immoral acts.

The Duke returns in his usual clothes, saying that he will hear all grievances immediately. Isabella tells her story, and the Duke pretends not to believe her. Eventually, the Duke reveals his dual identity, and everyone is forced to be honest. Angelo confesses to his misdeeds, Claudio is pardoned, and the Duke asks Isabella to marry him."

### Who am I talking to?

Duke Vincentio directly, but the others at the city gate are Angelo, Friar Peter, Mariana, Escalus, and officers.

### Moment Before?

At the city gate, The Duke is singing Angelo's praises and thanking him for his service. The Friar has urged me forward to speak to the Duke (to tell him of Angelo's crimes) and the Duke proclaims that Angelo shall give me justice, but I insist on the Duke himself "hearing me." I refer to Angelo the devil, and Angelo interjects and proclaims that I do not have all of my wits, saying "And she will speak both bitterly and strange." Then, I speak.

### Character Notes (From *Shakespeare A to Z*):

- "She is, in her strict insistence on morality, as extreme as Angelo was when he sentenced Claudio. She realizes her error by the end of the play and requests mercy for Angelo when he is condemned to death by the Duke."
- "Isabella undergoes a great change of heart in the course of the play, for neither acceptance nor leniency seem part of her nature at first. Like Angelo, before he succumbs to her beauty, she is strictly insistent on virtue. Not only is she about to enter a nunnery, she regrets that its rules are not strict enough."

### Word Definitions (from Lexicons):

- Forsworn: swear falsely, perjury
- Reckon: to cast account, to compute, to calculate
- Caitiff: wretch, slave, used as a term of reproach
- Conjure: to call on with solemnity
- Grave: worthy, reverend, venerable
- Absolute: highly accomplished, faultless, perfect
- Shy: keeping at a distance, reserved, demure
- Caracts: distinctive marks
- Form: external appearance, empty show
- Arch-villain: a great and confirmed villain

### Notes from work sessions:

- BIG NOTE: pronunciation of Angelo: æ sound on the "A"
- Practice pushing against a wall saying the monologue, then step away from the wall and go right into it again.
- Breathe and go, Breathe and go. Don't pause.
- Word Ladders: specify/build adulterous thief, hypocrite, and virgin-violator; specify/build shy, grave, just, absolute; specify/build dressings caracts, titles, forms
- Imagine the Duke dismissing me and walking away as I am starting (from work session with James DeVita)...I *need* him to listen to me. I need him to believe me. I need him to bring Angelo to justice. Really see the Duke.



Classical/Comedic (Romantic)

*Romeo and Juliet* [Act 2, Scene 2]

By: William Shakespeare

Character: Juliet, Teens (Approximate time: 45 seconds)

**JULIET**

O swear not by the moon, th'inconstant moon,  
That monthly changes in her circled orb,  
Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.

**ROMEO**

~~What shall I swear by?~~

**JULIET**

Do not swear at all.

Or if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,  
Which is the god of my idolatry,  
And I'll believe thee.

**ROMEO**

~~If my heart's dear love—~~

**JULIET**

Well, do not swear. Although I joy in thee,  
I have no joy of this contract to-night:  
It is too rash, too unadvis'd, too sudden,  
Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be

Ere one can say 'It lightens.' Sweet, good night.

This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,

May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet.

Good night, good night. As sweet repose and rest

Come to thy heart as that within my breast.

### Synopsis (from *Shakespeare A to Z*):

The Chorus tells, in a sonnet, that the play will concern a pair of lovers whose deaths shall end the conflict between their feuding families.

Servants of the Capulet family fight Abram and Balthasar of the Montague household, in a street in Verona. Benvolio appears and tries to stop them, but Tybalt enters and insists on dueling with him. The Ladies of the two houses along with the prince chastise both families. The prince declares that any further fighting will be punished with death. Romeo approaches, and Benvolio interrogates him about his recent melancholy behavior. Romeo is in love with a woman, Rosaline, who is sworn to chastity and ignores him.

Paris seeks Capulet's permission to marry his daughter, Juliet. Capulet thinks Juliet is too young, but agrees to let him marry her if he can win her affections at the banquet the following night. Romeo and Benvolio read the guest list for an illiterate servant, and the list includes Rosaline. They decide to attend the banquet in disguise.

Lady Capulet tells Juliet about her father's plans for her marriage, and Juliet coolly agrees to consider Paris out of filial duty.

Romeo, Benvolio, and Mercutio arrive at the banquet. Romeo notices Juliet and is enthralled by her beauty. He addresses Juliet, and their love immediately blossoms as they kiss. They find out that they are from rival families, and they are distressed.

Romeo seeks out Juliet after the party, spotting her at her window soliloquizing about her love for Romeo and her regret that he is a Montague. He reveals himself, and they speak of their love and exchange vows. Juliet is called away by the Nurse, but she returns to say that she will send a messenger to Romeo the next day, to whom he can convey a plan for them to marry. She leaves but returns once more, and they exchange loving farewells.

Friar Laurence agrees to help Romeo and Juliet marry. Unfortunately, a duel occurs between Mercutio and Tybalt, in which Mercutio gets killed. Romeo had involvement, so the prince banishes Romeo. Lord Capulet ordains that Juliet shall be married to Paris in three days. Juliet refuses, still intending secretly to marry Romeo. The Friar gives her a potion that will make her appear to be dead, so she will be laid in her family crypt, where Romeo will meet her so they can flee together. The plan does not go well though, as Romeo hears of her "death" and goes back to Verona to find her body and kill himself along side her. He finds her body, kills Paris (who is in the tomb), and then kills himself. Juliet awakens and kills herself as well.

The families arrive and learn of the whole plan, and the Prince points out that the feud between the two families has led to this moment, and Montague and Capulet forswear their hostility and vow to erect golden statues of the two lovers.

Who am I talking to?

Romeo, the Montague boy I met tonight

### Moment Before?

Romeo has come to my window and he is swearing his love for me. His lines right before I cut him off are these: "Lady, by yonder blessed moons I swear/That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops –"

### Character Notes:

- From *Shakespeare A to Z*:
- Conventional upper-class daughter
- Gripped by passion for Romeo
- Heroic capacity to resist her world
- Accepts death no less readily than Romeo when destiny has destroyed their lives
- Intelligent and perceptive
- Recognizes in him the bookish, artificial lover he has been earlier
- More aware than he of their danger
- Her response to passion is mature
- Courage, vulnerability
- 14 years old

### Notes from Work Sessions:

- "I'll" pronounce: like "aisle" not "all"
- "graciousself:" separate the "s" sounds
- "my idolatry:" separate the "I" sounds
- "contractto-night:" separate the "t" sounds
- "unadvis'd, too:" separate the "d" and the "t" sounds
- "As sweet:" separate the "z" and the "s" sounds
- "rest" and "breast" rhyme
- Picture Romeo, who is he?
- Remember that you like this guy, you're not just telling him what to do.

*The Tempest* [Act 1, Scene 2]

By: William Shakespeare

Character: Miranda, about 14 years old (Approximate time: 45 seconds)

**MIRANDA**

If by your art, my dearest father, you have

Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them.

The sky, it seems, would pour down stinking pitch

But that the sea, mounting to th'welkin's cheek,

Dashes the fire out. O, I have suffered

With those that I saw suffer – a brave vessel

(Who had no doubt some noble creature in her)

Dashed all to pieces. O, the cry did knock

Against my very heart! Poor souls, they perished.

Had I been any god of power, I would

Have sunk the sea within the earth or ere

It should the good ship so have swallowed and

The fraughting souls within her.

### Synopsis (from *Shakespeare A to Z*):

There is a storm at sea, and a ship goes down. On a nearby island Miranda is upset by the shipwreck but her father, Prospero, a magician, assures her that the seamen will be safe. He reveals to her that he was once the Duke of Milan. He studied magic in preference to governing and was deposed by his brother, Antonio, who was aided by King Alonso. The conspirators put Prospero and Miranda, then two years old, in a small boat and abandoned them at sea, but the kindly Gonzalo had given them supplies, including Prospero's book of magic. They then found the island and have lived there ever since. Through magic, Prospero has raised the storm to bring his old enemies to the island. He magically puts Miranda to sleep and summons his servant, a sprite named Ariel. He is in Prospero's command because Prospero rescued him from magical imprisonment. He gives Ariel a cloak of invisibility and instructs him to report for further duty. Miranda awakens, and Ariel returns with a young man, Ferdinand. Miranda is amazed and delighted by this the first young man she has ever seen. Prospero has planned for them to fall in love, but he adopts a stern attitude and imprisons Ferdinand. Meanwhile, Gonzalo, King Alonso, Antonio, and Sebastian are searching for Ferdinand.

Ferdinand is doing forced labor for Prospero, but he reflects that the work seems joyous because he knows his master's daughter sympathizes with him. Miranda appears, and they confess their love for each other, agreeing that they will marry. Prospero, overhearing them, is pleased. He consents to their engagement and calls on Ariel to help celebrate the betrothal. Prospero also decides to be merciful to his former enemies (Alonso, Antonio, Sebastian, and Gonzalo). He decides to renounce his magic once he has cured his victims. Prospero reveals himself to them, forgives them, and reveals Ferdinand to his father, King Alonso. Miranda is delighted to see so many humans. The future succession of the engaged couple to the throne of Naples is proclaimed. The king's ship is restored, Ariel is set free, and all is well.

### Who am I talking to?

Prospero, my father

### Moment Before?

I witness the terrible shipwreck in Act 1, Scene 1. I enter with my father and speak first.

### Character Notes:

- From *Shakespeare A to Z*:
- 14 or 15 years old
- Has lived with father on island for 12 years
- Established as a paragon of maidenhood
- Distant dreamlike memories of women



- Only men – Caliban’s attempted rape, for which she holds disdain
- Does she know about Caliban, Ariel?
- Compassionate, forgiving
- Delighted wonder
- Moral sensibility, learned from father
- Innocence of society, simplicity
- Father is all she’s known, no society
- Knows of his magic
- He keeps secrets from her
- Mindful of sexual propriety
- Modest, innocent womanhood, admiring nature, extraordinary sense of wonder

**Word Definitions (from Lexicons):**

- Pitch: thick black substance obtained by boiling down tar
- Welkin: sky
- Fraughting: constituting (the cargo, to load, burden)

**Notes from Work Session:**

- Perfect storm – watch ending scene, I have seen something horrifying
- Don’t get whiny, don’t get trapped in how you *feel* about it, really challenge your father and what he has probably done



Classical/Comedic (movement)

## *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

By: William Shakespeare

Character: Puck, no specific age (Approximate time: 1:15)

### **PUCK**

My mistress with a monster is in love.

Near to her close and consecrated bower,

While she was in her dull and sleeping hour,

A crew of patches, rude mechanicals,

That work for bread upon Athenian stalls,

Were met together to rehearse a play

Intended for great Theseus' nuptial-day.

The shallowest thick-skin of that barren sort,

Who Pyramus presented in their sport,

Forsook his scene, and enter'd in a brake,

When I did him at this advantage take:

An ass's noll I fixed on his head.

Anon, his Thisbe must be answered,

And forth my mimic comes. When they him spy –

As wild geese that the creeping fowler eye,

Or russet-pated choughs, many in sort,

Rising and cawing at the gun's report,

Sever themselves, and madly sweep the sky  
So, at his sight, away his fellows fly;  
And at our stamp, here o'er and o'er one falls;  
He murder cries, and help from Athens calls.  
Their sense thus weak, lost with their fears thus strong,  
Made senseless things begin to do them wrong:  
For briars and thorns at their apparel snatch;  
Some sleeves, some hats, from yielders all things catch.  
I led them on in this distracted fear,  
And left sweet Pyramus translated there;  
When in that moment, so it came to pass,  
Titania wak'd, and straightway lov'd an ass.

### Synopsis (Paraphrased from *Shakespeare A to Z*):

Theseus, the Duke of Athens, and Hippolyta are discussing their upcoming wedding when they are interrupted by Egeus, his daughter Hermia, and her two suitors, Lysander and Demetrius. Egeus wants Theseus to enforce a law that would condemn Hermia to death or life as a nun if she does not marry Demetrius, the suitor of his choosing. Theseus gives her until his wedding day to decide. Once left alone, Lysander and Hermia plan to meet later in the woods. They plan to run away together. They run into Helena, Hermia's friend who has fallen in love with Demetrius, and assure her that Demetrius will be available once they have run away. Helena devises a plan to tell Demetrius of their plan so she can win favor with him.

Another story arises of the mechanicals (Quince, Bottom, Snout, Flute, and Starveling), who have been asked to provide entertainment for the Duke's wedding. They are to do the play *Pyramus and Thisbe*.

In another part of the forest, Puck and a Fairy discuss the conflict between the King of the Fairies, Oberon, whom Puck serves, and the Fairy Queen, Titania, the Fairy's mistress. Titania and Oberon arrive and begin arguing. She refuses to give up a changeling boy whom Oberon covets. She leaves, and Oberon vows vengeance. He instructs Puck to gather for him a certain flower that he will apply to Titania's eyes while she sleeps that will cause her to fall in love with the first living being she sees when she wakes. While awaiting Puck's return, Oberon overhears Demetrius and Helena, who are now in the woods, and when Demetrius persistently repulses his admirer, the Fairy King decides that he will dose him with the flower also. Puck returns with the magical herb, and Oberon takes some of it to give to Titania. He tells Puck to find the Athenian couple who are roaming in the woods and to apply the rest of the potion to Demetrius. Puck finds Lysander and Hermia sleeping separately, and mistakenly assumes they are the right Athenian couple, so he puts the juice on Lysander's eyes. Demetrius and Helena appear, fighting, and Lysander wakes up and falls in love with Helena. He follows her.

The mechanicals are met for their rehearsal, and Puck turns Bottom's head into an ass-head. The other artisans are frightened by this transformation and flee. Bottom, unaware of it, concludes that they are attempting to scare him. He sings a song, awaking Titania, who falls in love with him as a result of Oberon's magic. Puck reports on Titania's ludicrous infatuation, to Oberon's delight. Then, Demetrius and Hermia appear, arguing, and Oberon realizes the wrong man has been treated with the magical juice. The next ensuing scene is full of arguing, love, and confusion, and eventually Oberon has Puck put the lovers to sleep. He applies an antidote to all of their eyes, so that when they wake, all of this confusion will seem like a dream.

Oberon and Titania go to the bower, where Titania is pampering Bottom and speaking to him adoringly. Oberon has gotten the changeling boy, so he releases Titania from the spell. Puck removes the ass-head from Bottom.

Theseus, Hippolyta, and Egeus happen upon the lovers sleeping in the woods. They wake up, and Demetrius loves Helena, so Hermia can marry Lysander. The Duke proclaims that the two re-united couples will be married that day, along with himself and Hippolyta.

The mechanicals perform the play at the wedding, the fairies bless the marriage, and Puck delivers a final epilogue.

### **Who am I talking to?**

Oberon, the Fairy King, my master

### **Moment Before?**

I completed Oberon's orders to put the juice in the Athenian's eyes and then stumbled upon the mechanicals near Titania's bower. I messed with them and turned one of their heads into an ass-head, and Titania "fell in love" with him. I run into Oberon, and he asks me what has been going on in the forest. I am excited to tell him of how his plan for Titania went even better than he thought possible. Oberon's lines right before this: "How now, mad spirit!/What night-rule now about this haunted grove?"

### **Definitions (from Lexicons):**

- Night-rule: order of the night, nightly diversion (Oberon's line)
- Bower: sacred shady area
- Dull: spiritless, lifeless, faint
- Patches: a paltry fellow, a fool
- Stalls: a small shed in which an occupation is carried on
- Shallowest: silly, stupid
- Nole: noddle, head
- Russet: red, reddish
- Pated: the head, used in contempt or ridicule
- Choughs: the bird *Corvus monedula* (a little black bird with a pointy beak)
- Stamp: the act of striking the foot forcibly downward
- Translated: to transform, change
- Yielders: one who allows or suffers
- Consecrated: sacred
- Anon: soon, presently, immediately after
- Barren: dull
- Brake: thicket
- Mimic: actor, player

### **Character Notes (From *Shakespeare A to Z*):**

- Powerful supernatural creature, capable of circling the earth in 40 minutes and of manipulating the elements...but he is more mischievous than awe-inspiring.
- Like a small boy when he boasts of his talents as a trickster
- I prefer that things "befall posterously"

- Some malice in my pranks, coolly indifferent to human suffering

Classical/Dramatic

### *Richard III* [Act 4, Scene 1]

By: William Shakespeare

Character: Lady Anne, young woman (Approximate time: 55 seconds)

**ANNE**

~~No?~~ Why? When he that is my husband now

Came to me as I follow'd Henry's corse,

When scarce the blood was well wash'd from his hands

Which issued from my other angel-husband,

And that dear saint which then I weeping follow'd;

O when, I say, I look'd on Richard's face

This was my wish: 'Be thou,' quoth I, 'accursed

For making me, so young, so old a widow;

And when thou wed'st, let sorrow haunt thy bed;

And be thy wife--if any be so mad--

More miserable by the life of thee

Than thou hast made me by my dear lord's death'.

Lo, ere I can repeat this curse again,

Within so small a time my woman's heart

Grossly grew captive to his honey words,

And proved the subject of mine own soul's curse,

Which hitherto hath held my eyes from rest;  
For never yet one hour in his bed  
Did I enjoy the golden dew of sleep,  
But with his timorous dreams was still awak'd.  
Besides, he hates me for my father Warwick,  
And will, no doubt, shortly be rid of me.



### Synopsis (From Sparknotes):

"After a long civil war between the royal family of York and the royal family of Lancaster, England enjoys a period of peace under King Edward IV and the victorious Yorks. But Edward's younger brother, Richard, resents Edward's power and the happiness of those around him. Malicious, power-hungry, and bitter about his physical deformity, Richard begins to aspire secretly to the throne—and decides to kill anyone he has to in order to become king.

Using his intelligence and his skills of deception and political manipulation, Richard begins his campaign for the throne. He manipulates a noblewoman, Lady Anne, into marrying him—even though she knows that he murdered her first husband. He has his own older brother, Clarence, executed, and shifts the burden of guilt onto his sick older brother King Edward in order to accelerate Edward's illness and death. After King Edward dies, Richard becomes lord protector of England—the figure in charge until the elder of Edward's two sons grows up.

Next Richard kills the court noblemen who are loyal to the princes, most notably Lord Hastings, the lord chamberlain of England. He then has the boys' relatives on their mother's side—the powerful kinsmen of Edward's wife, Queen Elizabeth—arrested and executed. With Elizabeth and the princes now unprotected, Richard has his political allies, particularly his right-hand man, Lord Buckingham, campaign to have Richard crowned king. Richard then imprisons the young princes in the Tower and, in his bloodiest move yet, sends hired murderers to kill both children.

By this time, Richard's reign of terror has caused the common people of England to fear and loathe him, and he has alienated nearly all the noblemen of the court—even the power-hungry Buckingham. When rumors begin to circulate about a challenger to the throne who is gathering forces in France, noblemen defect in droves to join his forces. The challenger is the earl of Richmond, a descendant of a secondary arm of the Lancaster family, and England is ready to welcome him.

Richard, in the meantime, tries to consolidate his power. He has his wife, Queen Anne, murdered, so that he can marry young Elizabeth, the daughter of the former Queen Elizabeth and the dead King Edward. Though young Elizabeth is his niece, the alliance would secure his claim to the throne. Nevertheless, Richard has begun to lose control of events, and Queen Elizabeth manages to forestall him. Meanwhile, she secretly promises to marry young Elizabeth to Richmond. Richmond finally invades England. The night before the battle that will decide everything, Richard has a terrible dream in which the ghosts of all the people he has murdered appear and curse him, telling him that he will die the next day. In the battle on the following morning, Richard is killed, and Richmond is crowned King Henry VII. Promising a new era of peace for England, the new king is betrothed to young Elizabeth in order to unite the warring houses of Lancaster and York."



### Who am I talking to?

Queen Elizabeth directly, but also in the room are Stanley, the Duchess of York, Dorset, and Clarence's (Richard's brother) daughter

### Moment Before?

Brakenbury has just denied Queen Elizabeth and I's access to visit the princes in the tower at Richard's orders. Then Stanley, Earl of Derby tells me that I "must straight to Westminster, / There to be crowned Richard's royal queen." I must go in haste. Elizabeth urges me to go, wishing me no harm. Immediately before this monologue I say/ask: "No? Why?"

### Definitions (from Lexicons):

- Corse: dead body
- Well: much, greatly
- Angel-husband: referring to my dead husband, who is presumably in heaven
- Dear saint: also referring to her husband
- Accursed: doomed to misery
- Grossly: stupidly
- Captive: captivated, gained by some excellence
- Honey: sweet
- Hitherto: to this time
- Golden: precious, excellent, happy
- Dew: used of things refreshing and beneficent
- Timorous: full of fear, timid

### Character Notes:

- I go unwillingly to be crowned Richard's queen
- He took advantage of me in my fragile state, but I fell under his spell
- From *Shakespeare A to Z*: "wife of King Richard III. Courted by Richard – the murderer of her late husband, the Prince of Wales, and his father, King Henry VI – Anne is half-hypnotized by his words and accepts a ring from him...[later] she predicts that he will murder her."

*Troilus and Cressida* [Act 3, Scene 2]

By: William Shakespeare

Character: Cressida, young woman (Approximate time: 1 minute)

**CRESSIDA** (Underline denotes some operative words, alliteration, antithesis)

Hard to seem won; but I was won, my lord,  
 With the first glance that ever – pardon me;  
 If I confess much, you will play the tyrant.  
 I love you now; but not, till now, not so much  
But I might master it. In faith, I lie;  
 My thoughts were like unbridled children, grown  
 Too headstrong for their mother. See, we fools!  
 Why have I blabbed? Who shall be true to us  
 When we are so unsecret to ourselves?  
But though I loved you well, I wooed you not;  
 And yet, good faith, I wish'd myself a man,  
 Or that we women had men's privilege  
 Of speaking first. Sweet, bid me hold my tongue,  
 For in this rapture I shall surely speak  
 The thing I shall repent. See, see, your silence,  
Cunning in dumbness, from my weakness draws  
 My soul of counsel from me! Stop my mouth.

### Synopsis (From Sparknotes):

"In the seventh year of the Trojan War, a Trojan prince named Troilus falls in love with Cressida, the daughter of a Trojan priest who has defected to the Greek side. Troilus is assisted in his pursuit of her by Pandarus, Cressida's uncle. Meanwhile, in the Greek camp, the Greek general, Agamemnon, wonders why his commanders seem so downcast and pessimistic. The wise and crafty Ulysses informs him that the army's troubles spring from a lack of respect for authority, brought about by the behavior of Achilles, the greatest Greek warrior, who refuses to fight and instead spends his time sitting in his tent with his comrade (and lover) Patroclus, mocking his superiors. Shortly thereafter, a challenge to single combat arrives from Prince Hector, the greatest Trojan warrior, and Ulysses decides to have Ajax, a headstrong fool, fight Hector instead of Achilles, in the hopes that this snub will wound Achilles's pride and bring him back into the war.

In Troy, the sons of King Priam debate whether it is worthwhile to continue the war—or whether they should return Helen to the Greeks and end the struggle. Hector argues for peace, but he is won over by the impassioned Troilus, who wants to continue the struggle. In the Greek camp, Thersites, Ajax's foul-mouthed slave, abuses everyone who crosses his path. His master, meanwhile, has been honored by the commanders over the sulking Achilles, and is to fight Hector the next day.

That night, Pandarus brings Troilus and Cressida together, and after they pledge to be forever true to one another, he leads them to a bedchamber to consummate their love. Meanwhile, Cressida's father, the treacherous Trojan priest Calchas, asks the Greek commanders to exchange a Trojan prisoner for his daughter, so that he may be reunited with her. The commanders agree, and the next morning—to Troilus and Cressida's dismay—the trade is made, and a Greek lord named Diomedes leads Cressida away from Troy. That afternoon, Ajax and Hector fight to a draw, and after Hector and Achilles exchange insults, Hector and Troilus feast with the Greeks under a flag of truce. As the camp goes to bed, Ulysses leads Troilus to the tent of Calchas, where the Trojan prince watches from hiding as Cressida agrees to become Diomedes's lover.

The next day, in spite of unhappy premonitions from his wife, sister, and his father, Hector takes the field, and a furious and heartbroken Troilus accompanies him. The Trojans drive the Greeks back, but Patroclus is killed, which brings a vengeful Achilles back into the war, finally. Achilles is unable to defeat Hector in single combat, but he later catches him unarmed and, together with a gang of Greek warriors, slaughters him. Achilles then drags Hector's body around the walls of Troy, and the play ends with the Trojan warriors retreating to the city to mourn their fallen hero."

### Who am I talking to?

Troilus; Pandarus (my uncle) is also in the room

**Moment Before?**

I have just admitted my love for Troilus, and he asks me why I was so hard to win.

**Definitions (from Lexicons):**

- Tyrant: one pitiless and cruel
- Unbridled: unruly
- Headstrong: obstinate, stubborn, ungovernable
- Blabb'd: to tell what ought to be kept secret
- Unsecret: not discreet, not close
- Rapture: transport, delirium
- Repent: to feel or express regret and self reproach
- Cunning: powerful
- Dumbness: silence
- Counsel: advice

**Character Notes (From *Shakespeare A to Z*):**

- "A knowledgeable flirt, able to consider the tactics of courtship"
- In this scene: "she frankly confesses her love, but in confusion she regrets abandoning her tactical game"
- Regarding the Diomedes situation: "awareness of guilt"
- Note to self: I want him to kiss me.

## *The Marriage*

By: Gogol

Character: Agafya, 26 (Approximate time: 50 seconds)

### Scene 3

*(A room in Agafya's brick house in the Moscow section. Agafya is alone in the room.)*

I'm in quite a quandary. If only there were but one gentleman—or two—or at most three...There are four. Mr. Anutchkin isn't bad-looking, though he *is* thin. Mr. Podkolyossin isn't bad looking either. Then, too, Mr. Omelet is a very prepossessing person, though fat. ~~What am I to do?~~ Mr. Zevakin is a man of parts. I'm in quite a quandary. If one could combine Mr. Anutchkin's lips with Mr. Podkolyossin's nose or Mr. Zevakin's assurance with Mr. Omelet's solidity, a girl might know how to choose! ~~The way things are, it makes my head swim.~~ I know what I'll do: draw lots and trust in God. Find a husband by drawing lots! Write each name on a scrap of paper, screw each bit of paper into a ball, shake the balls up together, and then—God's will be done!

### Synopsis (From article by Arney Rosenblat):

"Starting with Gogol's *Marriage*...the story is set in St. Petersburg, 1830s. A young court counselor, the very pretentious nobleman, Podkolyósín is mulling over the advantages of taking a wife. He employs a fast-talking matchmaker, Fyókla, to find him a good match. She knows just how to push his buttons when she points out he's turning gray. Along comes a friend, Kochkaryóv, brought to life as a comic Iago with great skill by Sean McNall, who, smarting from his own recent "help" from the matchmaker Fyókla, sets about to share his fate with the would-be-bridegroom.

The girl selected as the ideal match for Podkolyósín, and three other bachelor clients Fyókla brings in tow to compete with Podkolyó sín, is Agafya, a rich merchant's daughter, who at the age of 27, is bordering on "spinsterhood." Agafya, described by the matchmaker as a "sugar drop" ... is, in fact, lovely, sweet, and innocent, but with her own agenda to move up in the Russian aristocracy by marrying a nobleman.

Thus Agafya finds herself faced with four suitors: the waffling Podkolyósín; a self-important clerk named Omelet more interested in the dowry than the girl that goes with it; a snobbish retired officer Anútchkin offended by the lower classes of which he is a member; and a poor dandy Zhevakin who is fading faster than his weathered naval uniform.

As the self-serving motives of Agafya's suitors are revealed in their "wooing" of her, their collective attitudes toward marriage might be described as "what's love got to do with it?" Their attempts to rid the field of one another by subterfuge and nitpicking "She's not quite it" they pretend to agree, is one of the funniest and best executed moments of the play. Though Agafya fantasizes about love and marriage, she accepts that the reality of marriage will never live up to those fantasies. By the end, the last bachelor surviving, Podkolyósín buckles under the pressure and avoids the marriage in a most surprising way."

### Who am I talking to?

There is no one else in the room. I am solving the problem with myself.

### Moment Before?

I have just found out that I have four potential suitors.

### Word Definitions (from Webster Online Dictionary):

- Quandary: a situation or circumstance that presents problems difficult to solve; predicament; dilemma
- Prepossessing: that impresses favorably, engaging or attractive
- Solidity: strength of mind, character, finances, etc.

### Notes on character from play:

- An unmarried lady of twenty-six

- Setting: circa 1830, St. Petersburg
- What I say about me:
  - I don't like slender men
  - "Mrs. Agafya Omelet. Ugh!"
- What Fyokla (the matchmaker) says about me:
  - Peaches and cream, pink and white roses
  - Her father is a merchant
  - A general would be proud to have her
  - "What care I if he's not good looking? It's the man inside that matters. He must be gently born."
  - She's a princess
- The men:
  - Podkolyossin: court councilor in the civil service, graying hair, there's no getting him out of the house
  - Zevakin: naval lieutenant, retired, a gentleman, nice hair, nice nose, very tidy, no furniture, likes French-speaking, educated girls, talks about Sicily a lot
  - Anutchkin: model of refinement with delicious lips, a man of culture, delicate, refined, legs as slender as a girl's arms
  - Omelet: Assessor in civil service, a very grand gentleman, a big shot, big as a barrel and twice as human, around 50 years old ("He's so fat!")
- Note to self: make sure all of the men are clear and different from each other, especially with the Russian names



## *None of the Above*

By: Jenny Lyn Bader

Character: Jamie, 17 (Approximate time: 45 seconds)

### Scene 3

*(The following week. JAMIE is jogging in place and reading her SAT book. A knock at the door. JAMIE bounds across the room and swings the door open. She hugs CLARK.)*

CLARK: Jamie? You okay?

JAMIE: I'm more than okay! I'm rapturous! That means wildly ecstatic. Over the weekend, I quit dealing. I mean, I "desisted" "trafficking" in "narcotics." Paul was upset. Paul "chastised" me. (*Sexy*) He "blandished" me! — But *Arthur* asked me out! *Arthur* is — *pulchritudinous*!

CLARK: Pulchritudinous means beautiful.

JAMIE: I know! He said he never asked me out before because he doesn't like girls who sell drugs, and I said *he* sold drugs and he said he did it for the money, and I said I had done it for the money too and he laughed and laughed.

CLARK: He laughed at you?

JAMIE: That's the one thing about Arthur. He doesn't understand people who live on Fifth Avenue, and how we actually can be broke on a lot of levels? But I told him about his pulchritude and he was psyched. He loves it when girls use big words. Even when he doesn't know what they mean.

### Synopsis (my own words):

Jamie is a 17-year-old girl who goes to private school in New York City. While expecting a call from her drug dealer, she gets an unexpected visitor, an SAT tutor, Clark. Jamie and Clark instantly clash, but he does not give up on her. She has no motivation to learn until she finds out her parents aren't paying him anything *unless* she gets a perfect score on her SAT. In order to spite her parents and get some money out of the deal, she studies like a madwoman, memorizing an entire vocabulary book in one weekend. Clark and Jamie grow closer, and eventually fall for each other, learning to appreciate their differences.

### Who am I talking to?

Clark, my tutor. Early to mid twenties. I want to impress him because we have just cut this deal if I get a perfect score on my SAT.

### Moment Before?

I have taken a bunch of caffeine pills and have been studying furiously when Clark arrives for our tutoring session. I give him a huge hug and he asks if I am okay, implying that he thinks something is wrong because I am so amped. He is probably looking at me like I'm crazy.

### Notes (info/observations/questions on Jamie from reading the play):

- 17 years old, lavish bedroom
- Cigarettes, solitaire (17 and smoking? Playing alone?)
- Clark is early-to-mid-twenties (What does he look like? Am I attracted to him? Who is he comparable to in *my* life?)
- He starts by trying to make me use big words
- Big words are in "quotes," probably a note from the playwright on how he says them, patronizing, I roll my eyes at first
- I was wasted during the PSAT
- He's a mega-nerd, counting words, etc.
- One of Jamie's lines: "Studying is just not 'me.'"
- I'm smart, but I just don't *care*
- I used to be on drugs, only the occasional cigarette now, but I still deal a little bit for money
- My parents don't give me money anymore
- Very loving, very hating (bipolar-ish? Never a middle ground?)
- Clark has never had a private student
- Observation: I don't communicate well with my parents
- "Screwing up and being stupid are not the same thing."
- Clark's students have gotten perfect scores on the SAT
- No one has ever cared about me one-on-one in school or in my extended family
- "Dysfunction begets dysfunction"

- My family is screwed up, I talk to my mom through an intercom
- Triumphant when I come up with words
- He says my parents aren't paying him unless I get a perfect score (so that's the game)
- "I'm creative, that's why I don't test well."
- I will be really dedicated if I get this chance to become a new person (so if I care about something...I will be brilliant?)
- This monologue is one week after we make the deal, which is a contract that I get \$12,000 if I get a perfect score
- In scene, he asks if I'm okay right before I speak (he's probably looking at me like I'm crazy)
- Paul Devine is my dealer, a kid in my class (Is he a jerk? Is he cool? Is he cute?)
- Arthur is a hot guy in my grade who I went on a date with, and it was *hot*
- I usually date older men (so this was a kind of an unusual experience, kissing a kid in my grade)
- Clark doesn't know who they are yet (in the monologue)
- I'm really proud of myself for studying so much
- About Arthur: "He was such a klutz I love that in a man."
- I memorized the whole vocabulary book this weekend.
- I love card games. I know 40 kinds of solitaire.
- I took caffeine pills before this scene takes place
- 

#### Word Definitions (from Webster's Online Dictionary):

- Rapturous: 'wildly ecstatic'
- Desist: to cease, as from an action; stop or abstain
- Trafficking: to trade or deal in a specific commodity or service, often of an illegal nature
- Narcotics: any of a class of substances that blunt the senses, as opium, morphine, belladonna, and alcohol
- Chastise: to criticize severely
- Blandish: to coax or influence by gentle flattery; cajole
- Pulchritudinous: 'beautiful'

#### Work Session Notes/Questions:

Every time I use an SAT word, point at Clark. Start pacing back and forth at "Over the weekend..." Stop pacing and *melt* on "Arthur is..." Picture him. Then, have three focal points on next section, gesturing with hands to Arthur, me, and the drugs/money. Then stop and allow "he laughed and laughed" to land on me (and Clark) and stand very still for next lines. At "But I told him..." snap out of it and get really excited for ending section. End high pitched.

-What do I need from him? Clarify this.

-Clarify moment before. Really see him.

-Distinguish Paul and Arthur. They are two very different guys.

## *Necessary Targets*

By: Eve Ensler

Character: Melissa, early 20s (Approximate time: 45 seconds)

~~J.S.: We are not tape recorders. You do not get to hit and run. Seada didn't have her terrible experience in order to serve your book.~~

Melissa: If people don't read Seada's (see-ay-duh) story, they will never know it happened.

~~J.S.: This isn't about Seada. It's about you and your hunger for fame.~~

Melissa: I may want recognition, but only so my work will be seen and these women, their pain, will be heard.

~~J.S.: And what if no one reads your book, or reads your book and doesn't care, doesn't do anything? What will all of this have meant to you—to you, Melissa?~~

Melissa: This isn't about me, J.S. Everything for you is about the I...the big American, self-centered I....You make thousands of dollars sitting in a room with it, cultivating it, expanding it.

~~J.S.: What happened to you that you are so numb?~~

Melissa: Oh, [So,] spare me the pretending-to-be-caring analytical question.

~~J.S.: Okay. You're [You think I am] a lost little girl trying to find herself in the middle of big, scary wars...~~

Melissa: Maybe I am. Maybe I am. Maybe I'm familiar—too familiar with cruelty and violence—and maybe it came too early? So what? I think you're jealous. I think you would love to be me. I think you're suddenly aware that you waited too long for your life to happen and now you're lonely and old, and you don't know where to begin.



### **Synopsis (paraphrased from Random House, Inc.):**

Melissa, a young writer and human rights worker, and J.S., a successful middle-aged Park Avenue psychiatrist go to Bosnia to help women who have suffered traumas of war. Melissa has a contract with a major publisher to write about these women's experiences. So, they learn of the women's stories, and J.S. begins to feel compassion for them, while Melissa still retains a sense of detachment. The women claim they do not want or need to be "helped." One woman, Seada's, story of how she lost her baby spins out of control, and she runs away. "In an unexpected moment of revelation, J.S. and the woman she is supposedly treating find a common ground, a place to be taught and a place to learn."

### **Who am I talking to?**

J.S., the shrink I am working with

### **Moment before?**

J.S. confronts me after Seada has run off. She smashes the tape recorder we have been using. She accuses me of using these women for my own gain.

### **Notes (character info/observations/questions from reading the play):**

- Melissa – a young, strong woman, awkward (from Gina, who directed the play: American reporter character, she was abused, she's kind of taking advantage)
- "I need shoes that are grounding."
- Trained as a trauma counselor
- Scares me more not to see it, not to know what's going on
- In Haiti for 8 months, and Rwanda
- I got my first contract with a major publisher
- It is essential that I complete this book this year
- It's what I can't see that frightens me
- I'm uncomfortable with J.S. and her shrink-like questions
- Comfort terrorizes me
- The women are opposed to my book idea
- "We are necessary targets." (Title!)
- I'm against drinking, against the women drinking (why?)
- Trauma in my past...abuse? Alcoholism? Does it matter?
- I'm experienced with this stuff
- Right before monologue, we hear Seada's story, she realizes she doesn't have her baby and she runs off
- All the girls run to find her, Zlata has left, J.S. has been against me this whole time
- I start to attack J.S. as a person
- Job. It's my job. (I'm obsessed with the idea of job. I can hide behind it.)

- I used to have nightmares, now I'm traveling and the nightmares have gone away (so I keep traveling to keep the nightmares away)



Contemporary/Dramatic (Language piece)

## *Iphigenia and Other Daughters*

By: Ellen McLaughlin

Character: Chrysothemis, late twenties to early thirties (Approximate time: 1:06)

Chrys.: I think you are naïve. But then, of course you are. You were never really forced to grow up. I was the only one who had to. Our brother remains here, some phantom of a man-child we dream into an avenger. You are no less a phantom, no less a child, just taller, louder, ~~but still there really, stuck at that hearthside, blood still wet on the stone, his screams still echoing in the air, you are still standing there, mouth open, hands empty.~~ It's just that you walk around, dog our steps and eat sometimes so we forget that you're really just a ghost, that you never grew up. You know nothing about life. You just know your little corner of the history, and that you've fingered and fluttered in our faces until it's unreadable faint nonsense and probably wrong to begin with anyway.

Electra: ~~(Appalled, pulling violently away from Chrysothemis)~~ What I know I know absolutely. It has made me. ~~Everything I am is that knowledge.~~

Chrys.: *(Passionately reasonable)* ~~But~~ what are you? A white-faced maniac. Someone who is welcome nowhere. Someone who has never actually lived. You have wasted your life, whatever life you could have had, with hatred, broken your only body in bitterness, ground a subtle, complicated mind down to nothing but a dull pebble of one memory, one notion, one impulse to action never taken. Have you thought of that? All this talk of justice and history and perhaps all you ever were was someone who hated life? Why not kill yourself?

### Synopsis (my own words):

The play opens with Electra entering the courtyard in the morning, a morning like every other morning in this place. She goes about her daily routine of patrolling the garden after she stakes herself like a dog in the yard. Clytemnestra, her mother, enters and harasses the disgusting Electra. Electra pulls out a knife and Clytemnestra demonstrates how she killed Agamemnon (Electra's father). We learn that Electra and Orestes saw this murder take place, and Electra is waiting for revenge. Orestes has gone off to war, but she is waiting for him to return so he can kill Clytemnestra. Chrysothemis, Electra's older sister, enters with a calm energy very different from her mother and sister. She challenges her sister, asking her what she's *done* with her life. Electra insists that she *remembers*, and that is her purpose, her place in the history. Chrysothemis begs her to forget the notion of justice and try to live her life. Clytemnestra comes back and threatens to send Electra away, to hole her up in a basement somewhere. Then Electra is left alone onstage, and Orestes enters. He has returned. He talks to Electra, pretending to be a soldier-friend of Orestes, but eventually she figures out who he is. She begs him to kill their mother, but he is tired of killing. However, Clytemnestra comes outside, and Orestes tells her that her son has been killed. She is seemingly unmoved. She takes Orestes inside, and the sisters wait outside, knowing what is going to happen. The play ends when Orestes steps outside of the house, bloody, without either sister seeing him.

### Who am I talking to?

Electra, my younger sister

### Moment Before?

I am asking Electra to *do* something, but she insists that what she does is *remember*. She is waiting for Orestes to return, so they can have their revenge on our mother. Lines before monologue: "Chrys: ...Perhaps there is nothing like justice in nature./Electra: Then nature is appalling. We can do better." Then stage directions say that I go to her and do a bit of "marginal grooming," like smoothing her greasy hair or cleaning dirt off of her face, and Electra "submits, like a neglected child, to this minor kindness from her older sister."

### Notes from Work Sessions:

- Don't push out, but invite in.
- What I want you to do. (It's about her, not about me)
- Problem: right now, everything is important. (Don't stress every word.)
- We never start out to say a monologue.
- Figure this out as this is happening. (Discovery on the lines)
- This is one last attempt to help her, to save her...I actually *read* the newspaper, you just complain, you never *do* anything.
- "You know nothing about life" is a new thought.

-“What are you?” Really ask.

-“subtle, complicated mind” is a compliment

### Character Notes:

- From playwright: “She is the only functional member of this odd family...She also has the strength and power of someone who is actually engaged in life...She has chosen life over heroism and myth...she enunciates the truths I fear the most...her calm clear-sightedness...The easiest trap from the actor playing Chrysothemis is to perceive her as a cynic. She isn’t. She’s a realist...She does wish desperately, I think, for memories, for the sense of consequence that a real, owned personal history would give her...She knows what she is, the part she has always played. There has never been real love, nor its counterpart, hatred. Not for her.”
- From playwright at top of script: “an enigmatic, cool presence, a few years older than Electra” (Electra: “an extremely problematic woman in her late twenties or early thirties)
- “The one everyone likes. The one no one worries about. I am not frightening. I’m the good girl...I’m so reliable...No one ever asked me a question, not once in my life.”
- Stage directions: “She embodies a curious combination of subversiveness and apparent placidity.”
- I remember Electra’s memories and stories, but I have no recollections of my own.

*Proof*

By: David Auburn

Character: Catherine, 25 (Approximate time: 40 seconds)

Catherine: You blew it.

Hal: I—

Catherine: It's too bad, the rest of it was really good. All of it: "I loved your dad." "I always liked you." "I'd like to spend every minute with you..." It's killer stuff. You got laid *and* you got the notebook! You're a genius! (large cut in script...) You think you've figured something out? You run over here so pleased with yourself because you changed your mind. Now you're certain. You're so...*sloppy*. You don't know anything. The book, the math, the dates, the writing, all that stuff you decided with your buddies, it's just evidence. It doesn't finish the job. It doesn't prove anything.

Hal: ~~Okay, what would?~~

Catherine: ~~Nothing~~. You should have trusted me.



### Synopsis (from back of book):

"On the eve of her twenty-fifth birthday, Catherine, a young woman who has spent years caring for her brilliant but unstable father, Robert, must deal not only with his death but with the arrival of her estranged sister, Claire, and with the attentions of Hal, a former student of her father's who hopes to find valuable work in the 103 notebooks that Robert left behind.

"As Catherine confronts Hal's affections and Claire's plans for her life, she struggles to solve the most perplexing problem of all: How much of her father's madness — or genius — will she inherit?"

### Who am I talking to?

Hal

### Moment Before?

Hal comes in with the notebook and tells me that *now* he believes that I made the proof (but I had told him that last week and he didn't believe me).

### Notes from the play:

- I don't have any friends, and I don't like my sister, Claire.
- I'm naturally talented at math.
- I've been taking care of my sick father, and he calls me "lazy." He says: "You sleep till noon, you eat junk, you don't work, the dishes pile up in the sink."
- Hal is in a band, a math band, they make geeky jokes.
- After my mother died I stayed with my dad. He was a mess. He thought aliens were sending him messages. I dropped out of school.
- When Hal and I first meet, we don't really get along.
- At the reception following the funeral, Hal and I hang out and talk, we end up kissing and spending the night together.
- Claire tells me she's selling the house, without consulting me first.
- Hal finds a notebook that proves a huge mathematical theorem about prime numbers, and I say that I wrote it, not my dad. Claire doesn't believe me. Hal is skeptical and wants to check it with some of his math friends; he doesn't believe I wrote it. (Thus, the monologue...he didn't believe me until he could prove it to himself.)
- He runs in telling me that the proof "checks out" and that he checked it with a bunch of people and that I must have written it. (Duh!) So that irritates me.

## *The Maiden's Prayer*

By: Nicky Silver

Character: Libby, mid 30s (Approximate time: 1 minute)

Libby: Well, here goes. Here goes. As you may or may not have noticed, I've been a little depressed lately.

~~Paul: I noticed.~~

~~Libby: You did? How?~~

~~Paul: The crying jags. The three A.M. phone calls. The continual drinking.~~

Libby: I had no idea I was so obvious—I have to be more stoic. I don't think it's good to just go flashing your feelings all over the place. –Anyway, I've been a little depressed, which I don't think is inappropriate. I don't think it's excessively neurotic or anything—Dr. Porter used to say not all depressive, phobic, self-destructive urges are neurotic. Sometimes it's *appropriate* to want to want to burn yourself with a cigarette—anyway, I thought I was dealing with the Taylor/Cynthia situation as well as could be expected.

~~Paul: You drank too much, spent too much, cried too much and called in sick until you got fired.~~

~~Libby: Well, your expectations are unrealistically high.~~

~~Paul: I'm just saying.~~

~~Libby: You're judging me aren't you?~~

~~Paul: No.~~

Libby: I'm glad I got fired! I mean I hated that job! I really did. It was so degrading. Do you have any idea how exhausting it is to have to feign excitement over the renewed popularity of the TOGGLE BUTTON!! Just how small can a person's world shrink?! THE TOGGLE BUTTON, PAUL! So screw them! Fuck them! I don't need them! I don't need buttons and I don't need them! You will notice my raincoat has no buttons! I cut them off. I cut all the buttons off everything I own in a cry of protest!!

### Synopsis (from back of book):

"We open at the wedding of Taylor and Cynthia, a golden couple beloved by everyone – almost. Libby, Cynthia's hard-drinking sister, is in love with Taylor herself and she can take it no longer. "The hypocrisy, the bone-chilling grotesque hypocrisy!" Fleeing to the back yard she discovers Paul, Taylor's best friend, a charming fellow, who, since childhood, has harbored a secret love for the groom himself. As Libby and Paul are forced to deal with unrequited love, their lives change dramatically. Paul, promiscuous by nature, finds himself pursued by a young man, Andrew, who seems, at first, less interested in true love than in available real estate. And Libby, her career in a shambles, succumbs to a life without love, a life where sex is connected to monetary gain, rather than affection. When Cynthia gives birth to a still-born child, her marriage dissolves and Taylor sinks into depression and alcoholism. Surprisingly, Libby, who has viewed her sister as the enemy all her life, finds the strength to sacrifice her own desires to help Cynthia through her grief. While Paul, seemingly kind, always appropriate, betrays his dearest friend and secret love. He gambles with Taylor's life, hoping his friend will turn to him, at last, for comfort. *The Maiden's Prayer* follows this quartet and Andrew as they struggle to learn the difference between loving someone and needing them."

### Who am I talking to?

Paul, Taylor's friend – "mid-thirties, well-mannered and attractive in a bookish sort of way"

### Moment Before?

I have shown up at Paul's place a little before 2 in the morning. I am hysterical and shaking because I just had sex with an older man, who, I later found out, thought I was a prostitute. Paul wants to talk to me tomorrow, but I insist on now. He is trying to calm me down and he asks me what happened.

### Character Notes from play:

- Libby – "Mid-thirties, Cynthia's slightly older sister. Also quite attractive, Libby is high-strung and usually vulgar."
- Cynthia, my sister – "Mid-thirties. Taylor's wife. Quite beautiful. She has a charm and graciousness that borders on anachronistic."
- I am in love with Taylor, but my sister Cynthia is marrying him
- Cynthia tried to kill me when she 5...I hate my sister
- "I judge everybody!"
- Right before this, I had gone to a bar in a very sexy cocktail dress, and eventually older men started buying me drinks. One of them talked to me for a while then asked me back to his apartment and we ended up having sex. But, "the horrible



thing of it is...I didn't mind. I didn't care. It wasn't pleasant or ugly or thrilling or awful. It was nothing. It was just...brief." Then he immediately got dressed and offered me a ride home. "And then, he walked towards me. And when he reached me he put one hand on my neck and pulled my head towards his until our lips touched. And while he kissed me, with his other hand, he found my hand, and he put, in my hand, three, folded, one hundred dollar bills...and then he whispered thank you." "I wasn't, really, insulted." "I was grateful." "I was glad for the money." "I didn't want to go home." "I told him I lived here." (At Paul's)

*Collected Stories*

By: Donald Margulies

Character: Lisa Morrison, age: 26-32 (Approximate time: 50 seconds)

Lisa: ~~Wow. Thirty-one.~~ So, you wrote every story you practically ever *wrote* here, didn't you?, under this roof, in these little rooms. These are the books you read....

Ruth (~~amused by her reverential tone~~): Oh, please....

Lisa (*continuous*): This is the floor you paced. This is the view you saw from your window.

Ruth (~~flattered~~): Oh, knock it off. I think you're going a little overboard, dear, honestly.

Lisa: ~~Why,~~ you think I'm sucking up to you?

Ruth: Well, it ~~has occurred to me, yes....~~

Lisa: I don't mean to. What I'm trying to tell you, Ms. Steiner, in my very clumsy stupid way....Being here?, studying with you....? It's like a religious experience for me. (*Ruth laughs.*) No, really, it *is*. I mean, your voice has been inside my head for so *long*, living in this secret place?, having this secret dialogue with me for like years? I mean, ever since high school when I had to read *The Business of Love*....? I mean, from the opening lines of "Jerry, Darling," that was it for me, I was hooked, you had me. [large cut in script] So if I seem like a sycophant or an idiot or something it's only 'cause I'm trying to tell you what a privilege it is to be breathing the same airspace as you, that's all. I write much better than I talk so I probably should just shut up.

### Synopsis (from back of book):

"The conflict between the established artist and the adulatory fan who becomes a protégé, disciple, colleague and friend – and finally threatening rival – is one of those great topics...It resurfaces in Donald Margulies's provocative new play, *Collected Stories*, which confronts the prominent short-story writer Ruth Steiner with her student turned confidante turned competitor Lisa Morrison. What is new here is that the women are teacher and student both in academia and in life, that they come from different social milieus, and that for her first novel, Lisa has also cannibalized Ruth's experiences, to wit her youthful, shattering affair with the poet Delmore Schwartz. As always, Margulies is literate, intellectually stimulating, and able to create characters of both dramatic and human interest. And he sustains this interest through six scenes covering six years that only briefly leave Ruth's cozily messy, book-infested Greenwich Village apartment. Here two worlds clash in age-old, ecumenical dueling, led up to by great mutual emotional investment, and all the more bitter for it." –NY Magazine.

### Who am I talking to?

Ruth Steiner, age: 55-61

### Moment Before?

This monologue happens in the first scene of the play. I was late getting to Ruth's, and I have idolized her my whole life. She doesn't believe I look like a "serious writer," and this throws me off guard. Right before this monologue, I have asked her how long she's lived here, and she says thirty-one years.

### Notes:

- Definition (from Webster Online Dictionary) – sycophant: a person who uses flattery to win favor from individuals wielding influence, toady
- Setting: apartment in Greenwich Village, September 1990
- I'm very nervous to be here.
- I have read all of Ruth's stories, even the uncollected ones.
- Note for myself: She is like my Sondheim.
- I speak in "up-speak" (all of my phrases end like questions.)
- I wrote a story about bulimia, semi-autobiographical
- I don't realize I'm speaking in questions, but Ruth reveals it to me (I used to talk like that, and I thought I had stopped).

*The Scene*

By: Theresa Rebeck

Character: Clea, early 20s, a voracious party girl (Approximate time: 1 minute)

Clea: No no, I don't drink. My mother was an alcoholic. I mean, she was a wonderful woman and she really loved me but it's like alcohol is so deadly, I mean at these parties sometimes when I'm at a party like this? To stand around and watch everyone turn into zombies around me? It just really triggers me, you know? You go ahead. I mean, that's just for me, I don't impose that on people or anything.

Lewis: ~~I mean, its not like, I'm not like a huge drinker, or—~~

Clea: Oh good, because you know, I was at this party last week it was such a scene, there were so many people there. You know it was this young director, he's got like seven things going at once, Off Broadway. Can you imagine, the energy level of someone like that? Anyway, it was his birthday party, and they rented out the top two floors of this loft in Chelsea, it was this wild party, like surreal, and then at one point in the evening? I just realized, that everyone was just totally shit-faced. I mean I don't want to be reactive in situations like that, I don't like to judge people on a really superficial level or anything but it was kind of horrifying. I mean, not that I—you know, drink, you should drink! Enjoy yourselves!

### Synopsis (in my own words, in first person) and character notes combined:

#### Act 1 – Scene 1 – at a party in New York City

I meet Lewis and Charlie. Lewis is interested in me, but Charlie gets an attitude with me. (Regarding monologue, what I say: He was jumping all over me because I said “surreal” and I just started to feel stupid.) Then I get a glass of vodka. Charlie asks me why I talk the way I do. (Defensive but firm. I’m not apologizing for my language.) I down the drink. I’m from Ohio. I got to New York six months ago. I tell them about this woman, a “Nazi priestess from TV Land” that I met when I was interviewing for a TV job. Turns out, she’s Charlie’s wife.

#### Scene 2 – Stella (Charlie’s wife) and Charlie’s apartment

Stella, Charlie, and Lewis are doing tequila shots, talking about their encounter with Clea. Lewis leaves to get chips and Stella talks about her horrible day with Charlie. She refers to Clea as a “moron who looks good in black.” They kiss for a bit, then Charlie starts talking about the party and rich Edward’s apartment. Then Charlie suggests that they take a trip, a vacation. Then Lewis comes back and Stella asks if Charlie talked to Nick at the party. They fight, because Charlie is an actor who can’t get work. Nick has a pilot. Charlie doesn’t want to talk to him.

#### Scene 3 – Clea and Lewis at Lewis’ apartment

He asks me if I want a drink, I say water, get reactive, but then apologize and accept the vodka. We talk about Stella. I say that a lot of people treat me like I’m a flake and like I’m stupid because of the way I look. I do not like this. Lewis gets himself a drink. I am on a diet. I read somewhere that eating is killing people. Then suddenly, I feel weird and try to leave because I think Lewis just wants to sleep with me. “Everybody just falls in love with me all the time.” I’m overwhelmed. Then I ask him to kiss me but Charlie knocks on the door. He comes in and rants about Nick, who he went to see. Then I get him to stay and cool off with a drink. After awkwardness, Lewis goes out to get food and more alcohol. Then, Charlie and I have a moment and start to make out.

#### Act II – Scene 4 – Charlie’s apartment

Charlie and I are having sex. Me: “You have no idea how much I know.” He tries to get me to leave, but I tell him we should go to this party. Reality check. He can’t go to a party with me. He has a wife. Then we are kissing and Stella walks in on us. I leave after some fighting. Charlie and Stella fight and he leaves to go to the party with me.

#### Scene 5 – Lewis’ apartment

Stella comes over. They talk about the Clea/Charlie situation. Stella shows Lewis the envelope with the pictures of the international baby her and Charlie are supposed to adopt. She can’t get a hold of Charlie. Lewis admits he wants Stella, but she flips out and leaves.

#### Scene 6 – Clea’s apartment

I’m about to go out “with a girlfriend.” Charlie wants more vodka, and he asks me for some money. I give him \$10. He figures out I’m actually about to go out with Nick. Charlie freaks out.

#### Scene 7 – a party

Charlie and Stella see each other for the first time in a month. Lewis comes up and then Charlie finds out they're going to China to get the baby together. I come up to Charlie. I'm with Nick now, and I'm also his personal assistant. He tries to get me to have a cup of coffee with him or something but I shove him off and tell him to get his life together. Then I push by him, back into the party.

**Who am I talking to?**

Lewis and Charlie

**Moment Before?**

Charlie just asked me if I would like a mojito.

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